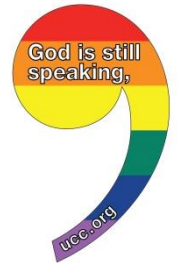




News from the Pews

March 2018

The Newsletter of Congregational United Church of Christ



A Word from our Pastor

Rev. Emily Snowden

“I have come so that they may have life and have it abundantly.” - Jesus (from John 10:10)

“This people honors me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me.” - Jesus (from Mark 7:6b)

“...Mindfulness will not conflict with any beliefs or traditions—religious or for that matter scientific— nor is it trying to sell you anything.... It is simply a practical way to be more in touch with the fullness of your being through a systematic process of self-observation, self-inquiry, and mindful action. There is nothing cold, analytical, or unfeeling about it. The overall tenor of mindfulness practice is gentle, appreciative, and nurturing. Another way to think of it would be ‘heartfulness.’” - Jon Kabat-Zinn (from *Where You Go There You Are*)

Welcome to Lent, Friends! We are in the thick of it. Since our focus is *Mindfulness*, I’m going to be mindful with my words and not say more than is necessary. I hope that you are finding opportunities to participate in this *Mindful Lent* in whatever ways feel meaningful to you. If you aren’t sure how to connect, let me take this space to remind you of your options!

1. **Small Groups:** On Thursday evenings from 7-8pm (with Roberta Ward) and Saturday mornings from 11a-12p (with me) we have small groups meeting to discuss and practice mindfulness and meditation. With over ten people at each session, it’s clear to Roberta and me that this is meeting a deeply felt need. We are so grateful for the conversation and honesty that has already come from these sessions. Even if you are only able to come to one session, come! All are welcome—skeptics and meditators alike. Bring your friends. Join us for some dialogue and fun!
2. **Mindful Lending Library:** Thanks to the Worship Team we have a library full of resources for children, adults, and families. These books, activities, and magazines all speak to mindfulness and meditation in one way or another. I encourage you to check out a book, read it, bring it back, and check out another one! These books will remain in our church library after the season of Lent if there’s one that you like but can’t ever seem to get your hands on!
3. **Sunday Mornings:** Prior to worship, the sanctuary will be intentionally empty from 10-10:20 for quiet contemplation. You are welcome to come and sit, meditate, pray, etc. during that time. The choir will continue practicing in the choir room throughout Lent. Also, we practice mindfulness during worship! Whether it’s the *Centering in the Spirit* or the *Mindful Prayer of Our Savior*, each of these moments (among others) invites us to come back to the present moment and be aware of our body, emotions, and judgments.



I hope you find an opportunity to take advantage of one or many of these options. I truly believe when we get quiet and still, when we pay close attention to the here-and-now, and notice our feelings more intentionally, we can cultivate deeper compassion for ourselves and then for others as well. I pray this *Mindful Lent* leads you toward a life of compassion and ‘heartfulness.’

With Gratitude, Pastor Emily



As part of our Mindful Lent, please consider joining one of our Mindfulness Meditation Small Groups. They will be held weekly throughout Lent on Thursday evenings from 7-8p (led by Roberta Ward) and on Saturday mornings from 11a-12p (led by Pastor Emily). The groups will be using the same curriculum. You can attend whichever time is best for you, though it is suggested to stick with the same group through all of Lent to develop group cohesion. If you are unable to commit to the series, feel free to attend when you are able. Sign-up sheets are on the narthex bulletin board, or you can email or call the church office.

From your Moderator

Lou Guagenti

Our congregation has worked so hard during our transition process. For that reason, Pastor Emily asks that we rest and practice mindfulness during Lent. In addition, she asks that our church cease all business meetings and do only what is necessary so that our lay leaders can also recharge.



I admit I found it difficult at first to be mindful. As Moderator, I wondered how the “business” of the church would proceed without important meetings, agendas, status reports, motions and votes. But then I realized that being mindful *is* the business of this church. Being mindful of the present. Being mindful of what talents we have to offer. Being mindful of how we might share them by connecting with one of our Ministry Deacons and asking how we might help, whether it be signing up in the Narthex to provide coffee and treats after worship to signing up for the Back Bay Mission trip in May. Those mindful endeavors *are* indeed the business of the church, not perfunctory business meetings.

The Deacons Retreat, held on February 10, provided our church leadership an opportunity to be mindful. We focused on communication, good self care, and being aware of what’s important. Our neighbor, NW Community Hospital Wellness Center, enhanced our retreat by generously providing one of their best speakers to talk to our lay leaders about incorporating healthy self care practice into a busy lifestyle. Our own Roberta Ward led us in meditation. We are grateful to both of them, as well as to St. John’s UCC for generously providing us a place to gather.

God bless this wonderful church during this time of reflection!



Church School News

By Meg Ulery, Church School Coordinator

In February our two Bible stories took place on (in!) the Sea of Galilee: Jesus Calming the Storm and Jesus Walking on Water. These two stories each had mention in three of the four Gospels. This month's unit, the story of Doubting Thomas, is found only in the Gospel of John.

Since the second century CE (common era), it has been common to think of John as the "spiritual Gospel," more theological than historical. His aim in writing his Gospel is stated clearly in 20:31: to encourage its readers to believe that Jesus is the Messiah and the Son of God. John's story of Doubting Thomas inspires all those who struggle with this faith process. We want to make sure our children know that faith is not always easy to acquire nor keep. We would do a disservice to our children to suggest that it is!

Let me share what the teachers will use as the basis for their lessons in March as we use the rotation.org materials.

Scripture Reference: John 20:19-31 (14:5-7)

Memory Verse: "Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe." John 20:29b

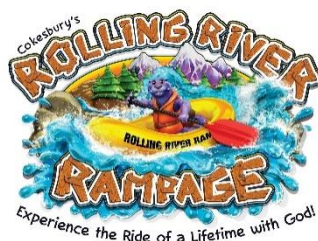
Concepts:

- Faith is a lifelong process that leads us from unbelief to a belief in a risen Christ.
- As we struggle with doubt or unbelief, we need the support of others.
- Jesus shows great compassion for us when our faith becomes weak.
- Our identity, our sense of self-awareness and esteem, comes from Christ.
- By grace we are blessed with faith.

Sure, these are lofty concepts, but the lessons begin to get at this stuff in a variety of interesting ways with different lesson formats and teachers – the beauty of the rotation model.

March 4 is family worship and communion. Church school will be held on March 11, 18 and 25. **We began the season of Lent with the children in worship at the beginning of the worship service and will continue that through Easter (April 1).** On that first Sunday in Lent we "put away the Alleluia" and will continue to learn other things about Lent in our short time together at the beginning of each worship service.

Looking ahead: In addition to family worship on Easter Sunday, April 1, we will have four Sundays for church school in April. We will be taking a look at several of Jesus' parables.



Vacation Bible Camp

by Laura Janus

VBC will be June 25 through June 29 from 9:00 am to Noon and will be held at St. John UCC, so keep a look out for registration information that will be available soon. *Rolling River Rampage* will provide campers the opportunity to experience the ride of a lifetime with God!

Opportunities to Serve!



Sunday Sign-Ups

Please check the Sunday Sign-Up lists in the gathering space. If you are interested in signing up but would like to know more, please contact Cindy Waters or Sandy Hake regarding hospitality, or Barb Goldsworthy about being liturgist. Thanks!

Mission of the Month

Please remember to sign up your favorite charitable organization for Mission of the Month! Sign-up sheet is on the big bulletin board across from the office. More information is available there, too.



LOCAL MISSIONS

Back Bay Mission Work Camp May 19 – 26, 2018

We are coordinating an adult mission trip in May 2018 to Back Bay Mission in Biloxi, MS. This will be our third trip in the past five years to Back Bay. They offer a variety of “hands on” service opportunities ranging from work in their food pantry; assistance at their day shelter; working in their food kitchen or assisting with repair/remodel projects on client homes. We stay on site in their bunk house. (Think a very large and comfortable building with a commercial sized kitchen/large washroom options; AC and built to withstand Category 5 hurricanes.) We will leave Saturday morning, May 19 and drive down to Memphis, then from Memphis to Biloxi on Sunday, May 20. We return on Saturday, May 26, arriving at the church around 8:30 pm. Given the number of opportunities, they welcome volunteers of various skill levels. All sign-up fees, transportation costs, and food costs while in Biloxi are covered by the church. Please contact Jeff Pattee (847) 612-9673 for more details. There is a sign-up sheet on the Mission kiosk in the Narthex.



Social Justice

Your Social Justice Deacons are Laura Robinson & Roberta Ward



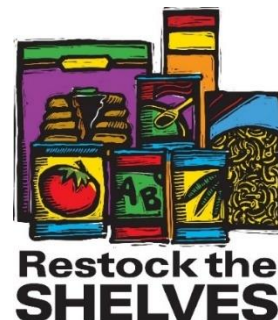
Blessings in a Backpack

Sponsored by Friends of Social Justice

Linda and Laura received this beautiful note from the Blessings in a Backpack folks at Jane Addams: *"Dear Linda and Laura and Other Loving Hearts, Once again you have reached out with caring to the children at Jane Addams. Your ongoing weekly donation is appreciated, for it creates a steady and faithful routine that the children have come to trust and look forward to but this "extra" touch is very special. Please thank all who helped make these Valentines and the message that they bring. Annette, Jan, Karen"* Thank you all, and special thanks to Linda and Laura for spearheading this!

"Second Sundays"

Every second Sunday of the month, CUCC collects non-perishable food donations to be brought to the Lutheran Church of the Cross Food Pantry in Arlington Heights. Baskets will be set at the altar, and donations may be brought up before, during or after the service. This is a small but important way we support our neighbors in need. Thank you for all you have given and continue to give!



United Nations World Day for Social Justice Prayer Vigil

Tuesday, February 20, was the United Nations World Day for Social Justice. Friends of Social Justice set up CUCC's beautiful prayer room, complete with prayer requests from the congregation, and any and all were invited to come pray the prayers of their own hearts, as well as those of fellow church members. It was a lovely and meaningful way to be mindful of the concerns of our world and to seek guidance from our ever-present and loving Creator.

LIVING OUR COVENANT *BEYOND BOUNDARIES* 2018 NATIONAL ONA GATHERING



Registration is now open for National Open and Affirming Gathering, June 27-30 at the Cathedral of Hope in Dallas, TX! Join us for this annual family reunion of our growing movement of LGBTQ-affirming communities in the United Church of Christ. Help us welcome ONA church #1500, and renew our commitment to become a church where everyone is welcome, wanted and needed, and no one left behind!

This year's theme: "Living Our Covenant Beyond Boundaries." We live in a time of great danger and great opportunity. The Trump Administration is threatening the basic rights for which the LGBTQ community and our allies fought for years. Violence against transgender Americans is on the rise. Research shows that anti-LGBTQ feelings — which had been declining steadily for two decades — is creeping upward again. And ONA congregations are challenged not only to defend their LGBTQ neighbors, but all whose lives and human dignity are under attack.

If there was ever a year when National ONA Gathering was needed, this is it!

We'll tell you more about the program in the coming weeks. Our keynoter is the Rev. Justo González II, a leader in the UCC's Sanctuary Movement, who will challenge us to renew and expand our ONA covenants. While we're still working on the schedule, every National Gathering is an opportunity to:

- meet and develop friendships with LGBTQ people and our allies throughout the United Church of Christ.
- learn new ways we can be effective advocates for the Gospel of God's love in our communities.
- celebrate, sing, and have fun!

More information and registration are at www.openandaffirming.org/ona-gathering. If you've any questions, please contact us at ona@openandaffirming.org.

Help us build our scholarship fund to help people with financial needs attend this life-changing event! Tax-deductible support for scholarships is an option on your registration form.

**OPEN AND AFFIRMING
COALITION**
OF THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST



Earn \$ For Missions at No Extra Cost to You! Here's How!

Gift Card Orders

Please consider purchasing gift cards through the Scrip program. It is a great way to help someone else at no extra cost to you. You pay the face value of the gift card, and CUCC receives a rebate profit on each gift card you purchase. That money is used to support additional mission projects.

The order box is on the short wall to the left of the prayer room:

1. Take an order form from the pouch above the box.
2. Fill out the form and attach your check for the total payment payable to Congregational UCC.
3. Place form and check in box (usually latest by 3rd Sunday).
4. Pick up order (usually 4th Sunday) from the church office!



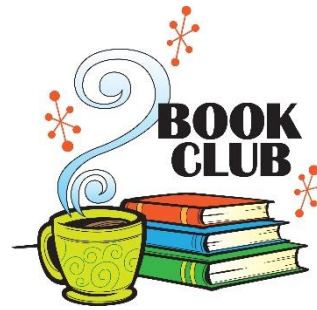
This month, orders are due
Sunday, March 18
along with payment payable to CUCC.
Cards can be picked up Sunday, March 25

Call Lisa Loeffler if you have questions! Thank you for supporting Missions!



You shop. Amazon gives.

And here is another exciting way to earn money for the missions budget with no extra cost to you. Amazon Smile will return 0.5% (on eligible items) to CUCC when you shop through the program. Good news! Amazon Smile has made it super easy by assigning us a direct link. So when you are ready to shop, use this link (you may want to bookmark it for future use!) and log in using your Amazon login and password. <https://smile.amazon.com/ch/36-2549996> (The link is also on the front page of the church website.) Thank you for all you do to help the missions budget! Call or email the church office if you have questions (847-392-6650).



Daytime Book Club

Daytime Book Club meets the first Monday of the month at 9:45 am. For **March 5** read *The Book of Joy* by Tenzin Gyatso, the 14th Dalai Lama, and Archbishop Desmond Tutu. Call Donna Blankfield or Barbara Goldsworthy for more info!

| March | |
|---------------|----------------------|
| Birthdays | |
| 7 | Debbie Eidle |
| 9 | Elyssa Lopez |
| 12 | Ron Flowers |
| 13 | Norreen Klemens |
| 14 | Diane Lanigan |
| 18 | Carol Petty |
| 21 | Sharon Silet |
| 27 | Kate Barton |
| 28 | Tom Klemens |
| Anniversaries | |
| 28 | Ralph & Debbie Eidle |
| 28 | Robert & Fran Onley |



Coloring Book Small Group All Ages Are Welcome!

The Coloring Book Small Group will meet Monday, **March 5** at 7:00 pm in the Garden Room. Enjoy an evening of meditative coloring! Contact Linda or Laura Janus for more information.

*If we've missed your special day,
please call or email the church office:
847-392-6650
office@congucc.org
and we will be sure you are added.*

RAINBOW CALLERS – SMALL GROUP – AN OPEN INVITATION



If you find a book title you are interested in reading, you are encouraged to join our discussion group! Our remaining 2018 reading schedule is as follows:

| <u>Date</u> | <u>Book/Author</u> | <u>Leader</u> | <u>Host</u> |
|--------------|--|----------------|---------------------|
| March 27 | <i>All I Did Was Ask</i> Terry Gross | Carol Petty | Barb Livermore |
| April 24 | <i>Killers of the Flower Moon</i> David Grann | Shelby Ricci | Connie Stewart |
| May 22 | <i>Lincoln in the Bardo</i> George Saunders | Sandy Hake | Carol Petty |
| June 26 | <i>Hillbilly Elegy</i> J D Vance | Barb Livermore | Linda & Laura Janus |
| July 24 | <i>The Storyteller</i> Jodi Picoult | Helen Jensen | Kathy Crusius |
| August | Summer Vacation | | |
| September 25 | <i>The Bully Pulpit</i> Doris Kearns Goodwin | Linda Janus | Helen Jensen |
| October 23 | <i>Good Harbor</i> Anita Diamant | Karen Brooks | Shelby Ricci |
| November 27 | <i>This Fight is our Fight</i> Elizabeth Warren | Kathy Crusius | Karen Brooks |
| December | Holiday Vacation | | |

Meeting Details: We meet the fourth Tuesday of every month (except for August and December) at 7:00 pm. Each meeting starts with a devotional and then we begin our discussion of the book. Afterwards we have a delicious treat and catch up with one another. We are done no later than 9:00 pm.

We meet in host homes, so for planning purposes, we only require that you contact Laura Janus at 847-870-7290 or at laura@ljtwins.com when you plan to join us.



- World Day of Prayer, *March 2*
- Third Sunday in Lent, *March 4*
- Fourth Sunday in Lent, *March 11*
- Daylight-Saving Time begins, *March 11*
- Fifth Sunday in Lent, *March 18*
- First day of spring, *March 20*
- Palm/Passion Sunday, *March 25*
- Maundy Thursday, *March 29*
- Good Friday, *March 30*

The calendar is a living thing. Find the most current one here:

<https://73899941.view-events.com/calendar/73899941/month/2018-03-01>

MARCH 2018

| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|---|---|---|--|---|---|---|
| 25 Gift card pick up! 10:30 AM Church school for children 10:30 AM Reflections for Youth 10:30 AM Worship | 26 | 27 7:00 PM Arlington Squares | 28 | 1 9:30 AM Cluster One 10:00 AM TOPS Weight Loss Group 7:00 PM Mindfulness Meditation Small Group 7:00 PM PADS Site | 2 World Day of Prayer | 3 9:00 AM Women's Breakfast at Ely's on Golf Rd, All Women Welcome 11:00 AM Mindfulness Meditation Small Group |
| 4 10:30 AM Worship with communion | 5 9:45 AM Morning Book Group (Garden Room) 7:00 PM Coloring Book Group - Garden Room | 6 12:00 PM Men's lunch at Eros 7:00 PM Arlington Squares | 7 | 8 10:00 AM TOPS Weight Loss Group 7:00 PM Mindfulness Meditation Small Group 7:00 PM PADS Site | 9 Office Closed | 10 11:00 AM Mindfulness Meditation Small Group |
| 11 Daylight-Saving Time Begins 10:30 AM Church school for children 10:30 AM Reflections for Youth 10:30 AM Worship 6:00 PM Crew/FYS | 12 | 13 7:00 PM Arlington Squares | 14 12:00 PM AH Ministerial Association | 15 10:00 AM TOPS Weight Loss Group 7:00 PM Mindfulness Meditation Small Group 7:00 PM PADS Site | 16 | 17 11:00 AM Mindfulness Meditation Small Group |
| 18 Gift card orders due! 10:30 AM Church school for children 10:30 AM Reflections for Youth 10:30 AM Worship | 19 | 20 First Day of Spring 7:00 PM Arlington Squares | 21 | 22 10:00 AM TOPS Weight Loss Group 7:00 PM Mindfulness Meditation Small Group 7:00 PM PADS Site | 23 | 24 9:00 AM Chicago Calligraphy Collective 11:00 AM Mindfulness Meditation Small Group |
| 25 Gift card pick up! Palm Sunday 9:00 AM Chicago Calligraphy Collective 10:30 AM Church school for children 10:30 AM Reflections for Youth 10:30 AM Worship | 26 | 27 7:00 PM Arlington Squares | 28 | 29 Maundy Thursday 10:00 AM TOPS Weight Loss Group 7:00 PM PADS Site 7:30 PM Maundy Thursday service | 30 Good Friday 7:00 PM Good Friday service at Christian Church | 31 |

Congregational United Church of Christ

1001 West Kirchhoff Road
Arlington Heights, IL 60005-2420

Phone 847-392-6650

Website: www.CongUCC.org

Email: office@CongUCC.org

Facebook: www.facebook.com/conguccah

Sunday Worship at 10:30 am all year

- ❖ Infant and toddler child care is offered in the Nursery (first floor)
 - ❖ Church School for children (downstairs) (Sept-May)
- ❖ Reflections for Youth (in the Garden Room, first floor) (Sept-May)
Children are always welcome in worship!

On Communion Sundays (1st Sunday each month), children & youth are in church. (No church school.)

CUCC Staff & Leadership

| | |
|--|---|
| Rev. Emily Snowden pastor@congucc.org | Pastor |
| Norreen Klemens norreen@comcast.net | Organist & Dir. of Choir Chimes |
| Megan Murray mmurray84@gmail.com | Choir Director |
| Nancy Pardo office@congucc.org | Church Secretary & Bookkeeper |
| Lou Guagenti | Moderator |
| Lisa Loeffler | Co-Moderator |
| Laura Janus | Treasurer |
| Shirley Guagenti | Financial Sec'y |
| Linda Janus | Asst. Fin'l Sec'y |
| Carol Petty | Clerk |
| Jim & Sally Schiavone | Delegates-CMA & IL Conf |
| Sarah Ruthven | Deacon, Spiritual Growth |
| Bruce Johnson | Deacon, Music/Worship/ Spiritual Space |
| Tom Harris | Deacon, Stewardship/ Nominating |
| Whitney Waters | Deacon, Evangelism |
| Laura Robinson & Roberta Ward | Deacons, Social Justice |
| Allison Millevoi | Deacon, Mission Support |
| Diane Lanigan | Deacon, Bldg & Grounds |
| Sandy Hake & Cindy Waters | Deacons, Hospitality |
| Sally Schiavone | Care Deacon |

Open and Affirming Statement Adopted June 10, 2007

The Congregational United Church of Christ in Arlington Heights, IL, in accordance with our shared value of inclusiveness, declares itself open and affirming.

We welcome and accept into the full life and ministry of our church people of all sexual orientations and gender identities. We maintain that every person has sacred worth as a unique creation made in the image of God. We believe that human sexuality is a gift from God.

We reach out to those who are disenfranchised from the religious community, and we seek growth and understanding as we continue toward inclusiveness.